

WHAT WELL-DRESSED WOMEN WILL WEAR

By ANNE RITTENHOUSE

French and American Designers Are Working in Harmony

A MAN who likes statistics has given out a statement that more spools of thread have been sold since America went into war than ever before in its history. This is taken to indicate that there is an important revival of home dressmaking. It is difficult to prove this condition of affairs, but the spools of thread are good enough evidence that the women on this continent are employing seamstresses to make new gowns for them or to alter old ones. And they are also doing their own sewing.

On the other hand, the shops insist that the sale of ready-to-wear garments has been immensely stimulated by the war. Women who are giving their time to war relief work are willing and anxious to get costumes with the least possible expenditure of vitality to themselves, and this can be achieved through the ready-to-wear departments.

Those who keep shops also claim that women of small means are buying better materials and paying more for their clothes than they have ever done in the history of American commerce in apparel.

Those who think out the situation say that this is due to the employment of thousands of women in new ways. Instead of these women purchasing cheap, tawdry things, they add ten or fifteen dollars to the price of a costume and buy a gown that gives steady service.

Building Up the Wardrobe In the Home

It may be safely argued that a preponderant majority of women are building up their wardrobes by a division of methods; they buy reliable clothes from the ready-to-wear departments or they hire a seamstress by the day.

If this war had kept women at home and not out doing the world's work, there is no doubt that the shops and dressmakers would have had a bad time of it. The entire process of building up a wardrobe would be accomplished in the sewing rooms of private houses. Women would be saving money, making their own clothes, dismissing servants and economizing in every possible way in the household by working in the century-old method that has been carved out for them since time began.

But there is very little of this attitude toward the household on the part of women to-day. The work for the war is done outside of one's own door knob. It may be whispered that hundreds of houses are being left to care for themselves, because women's services are needed in the cooperative work, done in mass, for the Red Cross and its various subsidiary branches.

Therefore, the modern movement is toward an elimination of the house as the centre of service and economical endeavor. Women spend money in order to be relieved of the hours of service which in other days may have been given to household drudgery; they want their time for a larger work.

However, there are women who have neither the vitality nor the trend of mind to give themselves to cooperation work all day, and they are directing the seamstresses in the spring sewing; and all those gowns which used to be bought are now being turned out from a machine placed by a sunny window.

Increase of Domestic Designing

The one outstanding episode in the interesting and important movement of spring clothes is the immense stride in designing that America has taken.

All that has gone before was experimental, but this spring the clothes are good. They make no pretension of changing the silhouette as laid down by the Paris designers; the only drastic revolution in silhouette which has been attempted by this country took place last summer, when the narrow skirt, which pulled upward from the knees to the back and finished with a bustle effect at the end of the spine, was thrown into the arena of clothes. It not only won out, although it was the work of one designer, but it coincides entirely with the clothes that Paris sent over last month.

This season the two countries go hand in hand. The silhouette is the same—narrow, with floating draperies. Take that one condition as the foundation stone and then build up as you please is the slogan given to every woman.

American Designs Preferred For the First Time

One is immensely proud of American clothes this spring. Our designers have had the courage to show them in connection with the French gowns, and it is easily proved that in several important houses the American woman chooses her entire spring wardrobe from American designs rather than French ones.

One of the reasons for this is that Paris has not laid unusual stress upon the tailored costume, and the American woman has reverted to it. She wants to appear in a simple but distinguished costume when she is in the street. The American tailoring is the best in the world, and the American designer contrives to get the best effect out of tailored material, whether he is making a frock or a coat suit.

France does not care for such clothes; her women wear them only under protest, and there is always a sash or a piece of embroidery or an unusual addition of lingerie or a bizarre splash of something that changes the mannish severity of the American national costume into something with coquetry that melts into the personality of the French women.

Seeing their opportunity and grasping it as they have never done before, the American tailoring establishments have worked wonders.

American Designing Has Jumped to a Pinnacle and Surprises the Observer---The Colored Sash and the Transparent Tunic Are Offered as Lures to the Economical Woman



CAPE BY GEORGETTE, OF PARIS.—Of black satin, lined with white. Trimmed with black and white fringe.



STRAW TURBAN OF BLUE, with sailor's cravat tied around the headband.

HAT OF BISCUIT-COLORED TAFFETA, EMBROIDERED.—The brim is faced with black straw.



GOWN BY JENNY, OF PARIS.—Of black satin embroidered in gold. Coat of black satin lined with blue.

out of ten persons will turn to look at this frock.

No woman objects to this, does she?

To-day We Follow The Army

France is doing the same thing to-day that she did during the Directoire, in taking her fashions from the campaigns of the army in those antique lands.

The British march through Palestine has brought back the Syrian turban and the floating veils and neck coverings of colored tulle, also draped skirts, low girdles and embroidered transparent tunics.

The French army in Salonica has been the inspiration for Grecian drapery—short sleeves, Grecian bodices and the corsetless figure.

The Grecian Bodice Urged by Jenny

The collection of Jenny in Paris was unusually lovely this season, and the American women are getting the benefit of it through the original models shown in every large city in the country and the hundreds of copies that have been put into existence since the middle of March.

Among the things that Jenny instituted was the Grecian bodice. You can see it in the sketch given to-day, which was made from one of her most successful gowns.

The material used is champagne colored satin, with a panel of fish net hanging over the skirt, front and back. The blouse is quite severe, seemingly shapeless and held into some degree of severity by two bands of the material that cross the figure back and front. The ends are invisibly tucked away. The sleeves are short, mere caps over the top of the arms, and the Americans are told that this kind of sleeve prevails for afternoon gowns in all the French clothes.

Capes in All Colors and Materials More Important Than Gowns

If any woman tries to get away from the wearing of a cape to-day she must apply an unusual amount of obstinacy and determination to her escape.

There is no reason for her to argue against the cape on the ground that her figure is slim or stout, short or long, for this cloak is one that covers all defects. In its modern version it is almost as shapeless and graceful as the ancient kind that stood as a symbol of charity.

There is a feeling among conservative women that black and white is the choice combination, but fancy runs riot, with the dressmaker's guiding, in every color from artillery red to black.

Probably beige is the color preferred. It is neutral, negative and therefore refuses to clash with a variety of gowns. It is sometimes embroidered in blue or pink wool; it is lined with Chinese blue or rose pink; it is fastened with knitted rosettes or with old brass buttons.

Bright red in serge, gabardine or woollen jersey is offered for the country, and let us hope that no one attempts it for the city.

Dark blue in satin, jersey, serge and gabardine is the color that the majority of women accept. They are afraid of anything else. If they wish a fanciful touch and they yield to color they will let the dressmaker put in

an old gold lining, which also harmonizes with nearly everything that can be worn against it.

There are dark blue satin capes for the afternoon and three-tiered ones for the morning, of dark blue gabardine embroidered with Chinese blue flowers done in worsted thread and also in stripes of gold colored chenille run over the shoulders or forming a square patch at each hip, or a military ornamental frog down the middle of the back below the waist.

There are capes that have collars which are merely long ends to wrap twice around the neck and throw over the shoulder, weighted to stay where they are thrown.

The sketch shows a cape made by Georgette, of Paris. It is of black satin, with a deep Victorian cape that makes a yoke. It is lined with white satin and heavily fringed with black and white chenille. The collar ties with two streamers of black and white satin, also weighted with fringe.

The garment may be pulled up closely against the neck as a protection from the night air, or loosened back well over the shoulders to form a background for a slimly cut, unornamental frock of white crepe de chine.

The Sailor Hat Must Be Worn

Here and there, in the circles where clothes are important, talk drifts about the incoming of the straight sailor hat.

No one disputes the fact that it is here in high fashion. Disputation only occurs when the question arises as to its beauty. After the picturesque hats of the last decade, the brims that droop and flare with the irregularity that sets off features that are regular or otherwise, the severity of the straight, harsh sailor brim is not liked.

There is no doubt that the milliners want to sell this hat with the straight brim, for they offer it to every one who comes into the shop. They proclaim it the new thing, which is a telling phrase that upsets even the sturdiest mind bent upon getting something becoming and desirable, whether or not it is marked with the tag of the latest fashion.

After a trip through the salons of many milliners one begins to feel that the hat with the dipping brim, the irregular line and the becoming shadow over the face is a trifle out of the picture.

Taffeta Softens the Stiff Sailor Shape

To disguise the severity of these new sailor hats the milliners use taffeta, which in itself is not a softening material, but far better than plaited straw. Over the taffeta they put splashes of embroidery, sometimes in color, in order to enliven the effect.

The sailor which the Maison Lewis of Paris has sent over to America and which has been accepted by the milliners as a leading hat, is shown in this sketch.

It is built of biscuit-colored taffeta, heavily embroidered in a bold design of biscuit silk. The brim is faced with black straw as a measure of protection to the eyes, for biscuit color is not kind when placed directly against the skin. At the base of the crown there is a ribbon of taffeta tied in a flat bow at the back, and just here the milliner takes all manner of liberties in order that she may make this hat more beguiling.

For instance, she substitutes Copenhagen blue ribbon for the biscuit color, she puts a splash of artillery red, or she uses dull gold edged with black.

A First Empire Fashion of Wearing Several Garments at One Time

It has always been said that when the Chinese are cold they merely add another garment. They do not attempt to have single costumes which suit the weather.

This ancient and honorable custom has prevailed in Paris for two years, and it had its thousands of followers in this country during the extreme winter that began early and ended late.

France took this lesson from the East the winter before last, when she was confronted with the same severity of climate and lack of coal that put the Americans into such a state of refrigeration last January. She added a coat to a gown, a top coat to a suit, furs to all, and if a woman had anything else in her possession that could keep her warm, she put that on. This is what the women of France did to keep themselves alive through weather that they had never before experienced.

Now that the spring has come and warmer weather with it, they keep up the idea, but change the fabrics.

An Economy Gown

Take, for example, a new gown by Jenny, which has received much commendation in this country. She has taken black satin and made a slim slip of it that fits the figure from shoulders to shoetops. The bodice is simple, the girder is at the waistline, as Jenny likes it, but caters to public opinion by having a second streamer that drops to the hips and ties in front. She has embroidered the bodice blouse with heavy Chinese gold. So far, so good. The gown has short sleeves and can be worn at any restaurant or private dinner.

But Jenny does not stop here. She adds a long, loose coat also of black satin lined with Chinese blue crepe. She turns this crepe outward in a straight rever that goes around the neck and down to the hem. She also puts a broad cut of this Chinese blue at the end of her mandarin sleeves. She ornaments the coat with heavy gold embroidery done in an artistic way, a bit on the sleeve and a wide band around the figure under the arms.

The entire costume is supposed to be worn at the same time. It serves for the afternoon if the coat is drawn closely together in front, and it serves for the evening if the coat is dropped over the back of the chair at a theatre or restaurant, or left in the dressing room at a private house.

This gown is one of those inspirations in economy that the dressmakers on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean have worked out with success. To the artistic designer, as well as to the artistic woman, economy and ugliness are not to be companions.

They have kept to the government's request for the elimination of wool as far as possible, and they have achieved costumes that are eminently fitting and distinguished on the American figure and for the personality of the American woman. More power to them!

The Spring Tailored Costume Is Slim and Trim

The American woman is given a chance to look extremely smart in her American made cloth costume, if she has the ability to live up to the part assigned her by the designers.

Those who do not care to give a single extra moment to their dressing heaved a sigh of relief when they realized that the straight cloth skirt and simple jacket would be considered exceedingly smart for the ten working hours of the day. But I think the sigh of relief was premature. The woman who wants to tumble into a comfortable skirt and slip on a loose jacket with a white shirtwaist will not have her wish gratified this season if she expects to remain in the fashion.

Skirts are not especially comfortable for the careless women, because they must be slimly cut and narrow at the hem, and they are really intended for slim women. Jackets are not loose, and they cannot be carelessly adjusted. They have narrow shoulders, tight armholes, long sleeves, slim underarm lines and they need to be adjusted over a figure that is properly dressed.

It is said that all the corsets and lingerie had to be changed to correspond with the new costumes, and one can well believe it. If one's outer garment is to be cut after the silhouette of a pencil there can be no comfort to the wearer, unless the corset and the lingerie are correspondingly cut. There must be no gathers at the hips, no rough lines at the waist, no fulness across the bust, no bungling at the armholes. Unless one learns that lesson and learns it thoroughly, she may as well pass by the new American and French clothes and wear the loose, full ones of a year ago.

The New French Draperies Float in House and Street

The severity that America lays down for us in the morning is easily changed into a floating gracefulness as laid down by France for the late afternoon and evening.

It is yet to be seen whether America will go in extensively for afternoon gowns, according to the French custom, but there is one thing of which we are quite certain—if the American woman likes an afternoon gown she will wear it through the evening, unless some formality of entertainment demands a more ornamental frock.

France has cut her silhouette as slim as the American designer has cut it for tailored costumes, but France gives a note of the First Empire in the seductive way in which she drapes this narrow foundation with floating, transparent material.

The trick is not confined to house costumes; it plays a good rôle in street gowns also, in a modified and demure manner. A tunic of Georgette crepe, for example, will be dropped over a slim underslip of silk or satin, and the sleeves will float away from the arms and come back suddenly to the wrists, where they are tightly caught in. But this gown will not

CHAMPAGNE-COLORED SATIN GOWN BY JENNY.—Gathered panels of fish net front and back, and Greek bodice.

ANGORA WOOL IS USED ON GOWNS.—Gowns of tete de negre satin, with collar and cuffs of gray Angora. The waistcoat is of cream-colored linen.

BIAS TUNIC A CHOSEN DRAPERY.—It is shown in this gown of biscuit-colored gabardine with deep collar of brown faille, soutached with brown braid.

be accepted by the American woman for the street. She will cling to her newly revived tailored frock or suit, and she will keep that French thing for the afternoon or evening.

French Clothes Encourage Economical Remodelling

There is a strong note of economy struck in these new French clothes, which is heard by the woman who is hiring a seamstress to build up her spring wardrobe at home. It shows the way to alter old gowns into new ones. The majority of women own evening frocks that have good foundations, the skirts a trifle too full, it is true, but otherwise ready to serve as the beginning of a new frock. The alteration in the skirt is a simple one. It consists of straightening out all the seams, so that there is no flare from the hips down.

This trick is going on in all the sewing rooms of the Continent, for the straight skirt is so well established that even the casual woman has observed that she is entirely out of the picture in any garment that has flaring seams.

After the satin or silk evening foundation is adapted to the modern silhouette, the woman who is bent on alteration and economy may drop over it a chemise tunic of chiffon or jetted material, or she may take good parts of ornamental drapery from other gowns and make them into a tunic.

If neither of these tricks is possible, she may buy wide, ornamental ribbon, or do as one woman did—cut strips from old bits of brocaded curtains that have served their day and, mounting them on tulle, accomplish a tunic that has real distinction.

Organdy Used Lavishly For All Occasions

The simple evening gown upon which the American woman has set her heart need not be fashioned of any of these sumptuous ma-

terials; it is made of thin organdy, often mounted over itself and trimmed with lace and serving for the four hot months of the year.

There will be no limit to the usage of organdy in America this season. One dressmaker took an order for twelve gowns of it on the coldest day of February. She said this was just the beginning of her trade in organdy costumery, so that is a bit of important news that the woman who is doing home sewing will like to know.

Another French trick which is shown in the new clothes and which should be eagerly grasped by the woman who is manufacturing new frocks for herself, is the use of narrow strips of Angora as ornamentation. Have you an old sweater? Cut it up and trim a new gown with it.

The Sash as Ornamentation Redeems Last Year's Frock

Still another economical trick that France gives us with her blessing is the sash. It is used on gowns that savor strongly of other years, and yet the novelty of its arrangement is such that it lifts the gown immediately out of mediocrity.

A jet frock, for instance, is loosely dropped over a narrow lining of satin, and there is a Chinese blue silk sash that is made from a long loop at the right side of the back, which is run through by a long streamer starting from the left side. This streamer ends with a slim train of black tulle and is fringed at the edge.

These sashes are used to enliven evening frocks in demure colors, but they are not omitted on street gowns. If you have a blue serge that needs alteration, remember that the French take a piece of Chinese or Japanese crepe, called "obi" crepe in Japan, twist it around the hips and finish it with a flat bow and ends at the side of the back. Eight